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ABSTRACT

The relationship of the hierarchy of teacher concerns to classroom verbal behavior was investigated. Participants were 66 elementary school teachers with 3 to 8 years teaching experience and 26 beginning teachers in two large public school systems in the southeast. The Teacher Concerns Statement (TCS) was administered to all 92 subjects. Four groups totaling 34 subjects were secured according to the distribution of scores on the TCS. Each of the 34 teachers was observed in live classroom teaching for 30 minutes on three different occasions. From the 102 observations and tape recordings, it was possible to obtain three different behavior ratings according to the Flanders System of Interaction Analysis and the Florida Taxonomy of Cognitive Behavior. Statistical comparisons were made to determine overall differences among the four groups. Results suggest a positive relationship between the concerns of teachers and subsequent verbal behaviors in the classroom. Teachers with more concern for pupil need were not only more indirect in their interactions but also made higher cognitive solicitations than teachers with more concern for self-adequacy, regardless of teaching experience. (A five-item bibliography is included.) (MJM)

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Relationships Between Concerns and Verbal Behavior in Elementary School Teachers[1]

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Recent studies at the University of Texas Research and Development Center for Teacher Education have examined intensively the self-reported concerns of pre-service teachers. Using data obtained from individual and group counseling typescripts, records of individual depth interviews and written teacher statements, a three phase developmental conceptualization of teacher concerns has been posited: a pre-teaching phase of non-concern; an early phase of concern with self; and a late teaching phase of concern with pupil (2).

Experimental studies at the University of Texas have used the theoretical hierarchy of concerns as a basis for determining, to some extent, the overall effects of differential treatments in teacher education. The evidence so far indicates that the model may be at least one useful way of assessing which experiences in teacher preparation are more effective than others in maturing or shifting concerns of prospective teachers away from self toward pupil benefit and need (3).

Although teacher concerns have been studied in various ways for some time, the Texas studies appear to be the first to conceptualize

[1]Adapted from a paper presented at the Mid-South Educational Research Association, New Orleans, 1972.

concerns on a self-other dimension. Such an ordering seems clearly useful for teacher education purposes. Somewhat unresolved in the Texas studies, however, are questions which relate concerns to outcome variables such as teaching behavior or teaching performance in the classroom. The present investigation was designed to consider the relationship of the hierarchy of teacher concerns to classroom verbal behavior. The focus, unlike the Texas studies, was on in-service and not pre-service teachers. Specifically, two questions were pursued:

(1) Do elementary school teachers who have more concern for pupil need (as conceptualized in the Texas model) exhibit significantly more indirect verbal behaviors in the classroom than teachers with more concern with self-adequacy?

(2) Do elementary school teachers who have more concern for pupil need (as conceptualized in the Texas model) make significantly higher cognitive solicitations in the classroom than teachers with more concern for self-adequacy?

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects in this study were 66 elementary school teachers (grades one through six) with three through eight years of teaching experience and 26 beginning teachers in two large public school systems in the Southeast. All of the subjects were female and were

distributed throughout the 29 elementary schools in the two systems.

Procedures.

To obtain data on the concerns variable, an instrument developed at the Research and Development Center, the Teacher Concerns Statement (TCS), was administered to the 92 subjects. The directions called for the subjects to freely express their concerns as they considered them professional development as a teacher. The TCS was subsequently content analyzed to provide determination of the subject's relative position in the theoretical hierarchy of concerns ranging from concerns about self-adequacy to concerns for pupil need. Scoring was accomplished by assigning one of the seven different concerns codes to each content unit expressed by the subject. An overall mean was obtained by dividing the sum of all content units by the number of coded concerns. A reliability coefficient of .93 for the codings was established with coders at the Research and Development Center. Table 1 illustrates the results of the codings.

Insert Table 1 about here

From the general population of 92 subjects, four groups totaling 34 were ultimately secured according to the distribution of scores on the TCS: experienced teachers with significantly more concerns for pupil need (high concern); experienced teachers with significantly more concern for self-adequacy (low concern); beginning teachers with higher concerns; and beginning teachers with lower concerns. Overall mean scores on the

Table 1

Percentages * of Concerns by Levels on the TCS

Concerns Level	Descriptive Summary	% Beginning Teachers	% Experienced Teachers	TOTAL
6	How can I improve my teaching ?	0	10	10
5	Are pupils learning what they read ?	3	38	41
4	Are pupils learning what I'm teaching?	7	17	24
3	How do pupils feel about me?	3	3	6
2	How adequate am I?	10	3	13
1	Where do I stand?	3	0	3
0	Non-teaching concerns	1	0	1

*Percentages are based on N of 92.

TCS for the four groups were 5.9 for Group E-H, 2.5 for Group E-L, 4.5 for Group B-H, and 1.5 for Group B-L.

Each of the 34 teachers was observed in live classroom teaching for 30 minutes on three different occasions during two and one-half month period. From the 102 observations and from tape recordings made during each observation, it was possible to obtain three different behavioral ratings on each subject according to the Flanders System of Interaction Analysis (ten categories) and the Florida Taxonomy of Cognitive Behavior. The statistical comparisons were made by applying the Cattell Pattern Similarity Index to the data to determine the overall differences among the four groups. Following this analysis, t tests were used to compare all groups on each of the different categories of the two observational systems.

RESULTS

The data are presented in three tables. Table 2 presents a summary of the similarities and differences among the four groups on overall profiles. For the Flanders System, the Cattell profiles showed statistically significant differences in all but one comparison. For the Florida System, all but two comparisons resulted in statistically significant differences. Generally, experienced teachers with high concerns appeared to have more likeness than difference with respect to the Cattell profiles while experienced teachers with low concerns and beginning teachers with low concerns and beginning teachers with low concerns appeared to have similar profiles.

Table 2

Summary of Cattell Similarities and Differences

Flanders System		Florida System	
Groups	Index	Groups	Index
E-H vs E-L	-0.812**	E-H vs E-L	-0.682**
E-H vs BH	+0.119	E-H vs B-H	+ 0.135
E-H vs B-L	-0.611**	E-H vs B-L	-0.681**
E-L vs B-H	-0.729**	E-L vs B-H	-0.667**
E-L vs B-L	-0.445**	E-L vs B-L	+0.575**
B-H vs B-L	-0.498**	B-H vs B-L	-0.680**

Insert Table 2 here

Table 3 shows a summary of the _t_ ratio findings on all four groups when compared on the 10 different categories of the Flanders System. Experienced teachers with low concerns had no behaviors characterized as praise and encouragement and experienced teachers with high concerns had no behaviors representing criticism. Groups with more concern for pupil need had significantly more behavior categorized as praise and encouragement, acceptance and use of student ideas and student talk. They had significantly less behavior categorized as direction-giving, criticism, and silence or confusion. Calculation of an indirect-direct ratio further suggested that both groups of teachers with high concerns were clearly more indirect in their classroom verbal behaviors than both groups of teachers with low concerns.

Insert Table 3 about here

Finally, Table 4 presents a summary of the findings on the comparison according to the Florida System. The two groups of teachers with high concerns were significantly different from both groups with low concerns at level one (Knowledge of Specifics) and level five (Interpretation). An important finding in the study was that neither group of teachers with low concerns had scores beyond level five on the Florida System.

TABLE 3

General Summary of Comparisons on Flanders System
(t Ratios Obtained on Six Comparisons)

	Categories	E-H vs. E-L	E-H vs. B-H	E-H vs. B-L	E-L vs. B-H	E-L vs. B-L	B-H vs. B-L
1.	Accepts Pupil Feeling	--	--	--	--	--	--
2.	Praise and Encouragement	--	1.83	0.96	--	--	0.727
3.	Accepts/Uses Pupil Ideas	5.82***	0.40	4.99***	7.51***	1.29	6.28**
4.	Questions	0.63	0.59	0.07	1.11	0.54	0.51
5.	Lectures	0.07	0.15	1.19	0.22	1.30	1.03
6.	Gives Directions	3.04*	1.42	2.17*	1.98	1.45	0.69
7.	Criticizes	--	--	--	1.25	0.94	1.34
8.	Student Talk: Response	3.11*	1.20	1.88	1.30	1.52	0.36
9.	Student Talk: Initiates	0.22	0.52	1.83	0.90	2.37*	2.34*
10.	Silence/Confusion	3.70*	0.56	1.37	3.36**	2.55*	0.81

Note.--E-H: Experienced teachers with high concerns; E-L: Experienced teachers with low concerns; B-H: Beginning teachers with high concerns; and B-L: Beginning teachers with low concerns.

*Statistically significant at .05 level or beyond.
**Statistically significant at .01 level or beyond.
***Statistically significant at .001 level or beyond.

Insert Table 4 about here

DISCUSSION

The overall findings in the study certainly suggest a positive relationship between the concerns of teachers and subsequent verbal behaviors in the classroom. On the 19 different variables in the study, the results indicated that teachers with more concern for pupil need were not only more indirect in their interactions but also made higher cognitive solicitations than teachers with more concern for self-adequacy, regardless of teaching experience.

The evidence in this study seems to be consistent with studies at Texas (1) in which pre-service teachers were found to change systematically in their verbal behaviors and personality characteristics as their concerns-level matured away from self-adequacy toward pupil need. However, the findings in this study need to be viewed cautiously. Loree (4) has recently noted in his review of the professional literature on teacher education programs that studies on the relationships between attitude or self-report devices and behavior have not yielded consistent results. One of the problems in using the teacher's classroom behavior as a dependent variable concerns the level of skill that is necessary to literally act out in live classroom interactions what teachers say they believe is important.

If, however, elementary school teachers who express more concern for pupil need do indeed have certain predictable characteristics in their teaching behaviors, then it seems plausible to suggest that the

TABLE 4

General Summary of Comparisons on Florida System
(t Ratios Obtained on Six Comparisons)

Levels	E-H vs. E-L	E-H vs. B-H	E-H vs. B-L	E-L vs. B-H	E-L vs. B-L	B-H vs. B-L
9 Evaluation	--	--	--	--	--	--
8 Synthesis	--	0.81	--	--	--	--
7 Analysis	--	0.58	--	--	--	--
6 Application	--	0.56	--	--	--	--
5 Interpretation	2.89*	0.61	5.41***	2.46*	0.14	3.42**
4 Translation	0.88	0.02	1.19	1.24	0.29	1.12
3 Universals and Abstractions	1.02	1.27	0.46	0.25	0.96	1.97
2 Dealing with Specifics	0.75	0.96	0.33	1.54	0.45	0.99
1 Knowledge of Specifics	2.56	0.57	6.06***	2.67*	0.24	4.84***

Note.--E-H: Experienced teachers with high concerns; E-L: Experienced teachers with low concerns; B-H: Beginning teachers with high concerns; and B-L: Beginning teachers with low concerns.

*Statistically significant at .05 level or beyond.
**Statistically significant at .01 level or beyond.
***Statistically significant at .001 level or beyond.

model could be useful in planning experiences in teacher education programs that would serve as "maturing" experiences. Designing course sequence as well as course content around such a conceptual framework would certainly be one step toward current demands for relevancy. Conceivably, the model could even be useful to administrators and others in public schools who plan in-service activities.

There are several implications for future research using the concerns model. Parsons (5) recently reported that attempts will be made to validate hypotheses that a positive relationship exists between pupil-need concerns and high teaching competence. Another series of studies will examine the degree to which pre-service concerns are maleable through manipulations of the physical or psychological setting of a teacher. A final series of studies will analyze the effects on pre-service teachers as a result of deliberate attempts to match curricula with the various concerns levels of students.

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